

SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA TOGETHER

Executive Summary.

Supporting and maintaining school library programs ensures that local school systems can continue to provide stakeholder access to resources in order to prepare students for college, career, and life. Library Media Specialists (School Librarians) forge and maintain connections between schools and homes through access to materials whether in person or in remote settings. As leaders, they must continue to collaborate with staff and students to create information literate, informed and empowered digital citizens, and foster critical thinking. School Librarians are essential educators who positively impact students, staff, families and the school community.

Library Media Specialists are Teachers and Instructional Partners

As an educator and a collaborator, school librarians teach students to efficiently, effectively, and ethically access and utilize print and digital resources for lifelong learning in multiple literacies. This instruction and collaboration must continue in all Maryland schools regardless of the learning environment.

Library Media Specialists are Information Specialists

School librarians enrich the learning environment by expertly vetting and integrating approved innovative digital tools and sharing award-winning books through diverse collections. In addition, school librarians provide guidance on emergent issues including accessibility, privacy, digital ethics, and copyright. They are leaders in the creation of engaging lessons, leveraging their expertise to support staff and student success.

Library Media Programs Provide Unique Learning Environments

The library program fosters a safe, inviting, and inclusive community learning environment that promotes a culture of belonging. School librarians build virtual and physical spaces that enable students to access materials in multiple formats to meet diverse instructional and personal needs. School libraries are dynamic learning environments that should remain functional in order to allow students to access the collection.

Library Media Programs Support Literacy and Student Achievement

A substantial body of research⁽¹⁾ finds that reading, writing, and graduation rates improve where schools employ certified school librarians. The benefits associated with effective school library programs are strongest for the most vulnerable and at-risk student groups.

Library Media Programs Foster Equity and Connections

School librarians maintain diverse collections by selecting literature that enables students to develop knowledge, share experiences and cultivate empathy. They guide students to consider multiple perspectives on global issues, historical injustices, and underrepresented voices. School libraries offer spaces and resources that encourage a sense of belonging and support social and emotional learning. This is where students not only encounter a variety of voices, but also where they learn to use and share their own voice as both consumers and creators of content.

A collaborative project between The Maryland State Department of Education and Local School System Leaders

(1) [Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us.](#)